59 big cats seized from private farms all over Punjab

By Shoaib Ahmed

LAHORE: The Punjab Wildlife and Parks Department has seized 59 big cats from different parts of the province and arrested eight suspects for not following the department's SOPs for housing the animals.

As per details, the department seized 20 lions from a breeding farm in the Lahore division and arrested Fayaz alias Faizi and three others for violating the instructions that every lion pair should have at least 22 marlas of space for captivity.

While another 23 big cats, including 14 tigers, four lions and five ligers were seized from a facility in CITI housing, Jhelum and one Muhammad Aamir was arrested.

In Multan, a private wildlife breeding farm near the Askari Bypass in Cantonment area was also sealed for non-compliance of SOPs.

As many as nine lions and a monkey were seized from the facility and an FIR was registered against one Waqas Ayub.

Similarly in Gujranwala division, one person was arrested for possessing three lions in violation of the department's guidelines at the Canal View Housing Society. Two lions were retrieved from a home in Luther village in Sialkot district and one arrest was made. Meanwhile, another two lions being kept at the Imam Jalvi Darbar in Faisalabad were also seized.

Additional Chief Wildlife Ranger Mudassar Hassan told *Dawn* that the department had been issuing notices on the print and social media platforms that farms that failed to fulfill the standards for keeping wild animals would be sealed. He said that the facilities that had not followed the guidelines had been sealed and the department would take care of the lions. Sources claimed that the fate of the lions would be decided later.

Former cricketer's son arrested on rape charge

LAHORE: Police have arrested the son of a former cricketer allegedly in a rape case of a domestic worker on Saturday.

The Barki Police Station registered the case against the son on the complaint of his housemaid on Jan 23.

According to the FIR, the suspect allegedly called his maid to report to work urgently.

The complainant told police that the suspect picked her up in his car from the main gate of a housing society and drove her to his farmhouse. The suspect then forced himself on her. The woman later approached the Barki Police Station and submitted an application for registration of a rape case.

Police have taken the suspect in custody and started the investigation.

A senior police official, on condition of anonymity, confirmed the arrest, saying medical examinations of both the suspect and the complainant were being conducted as a part of the investigation.

The suspect is a former first-class cricketer. — Staff Reporter

Deconstructing history and idea of Pakistan

By Irfan Aslam

NADEEM F. Paracha, Shehzad Ghias and Pervez Hoodbhoy in a session at Afkar-e-Taza ThinkFest at Alhamra. — Dawn

LAHORE: Speakers in a session on two books, one by academic Pervez Hoodbhoy and the other by trainer and stand-up comedian Shehzad Ghias, sat together with journalist Nadeem F. Paracha to dissect historical narratives of Pakistan.

Hoodbhoy has published his book, *Pakistan Origins, Identity and Future*, while Shehzad Ghias wrote *Pakistan Lost: Ideas on the Idea of Pakistan*.

Paracha termed the former a culmination of Hoodbhoy's writings and thoughts about Pakistani society, politics one of the finest books on Pakistaniat, as it analysed three personalities that defined Pakistani identity, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, Abual A'la Maududi and Allama Iqbal.

Hoodbhoy spoke about two aspects of Syed Ahmad's personality. He said one aspect of his personality was of a great progressive man who led the Muslims of India to stop wailing, remembering their glorious past, adopt the new technology brought by the British by learning the English language. Sir Syed also taught the Muslims how to live with the British, he said and called him a reformer because he tried to bring science and religion together. According to Hoodbhoy, Sir Syed denied the existence of religious miracles and called them figurative, receiving many fatwas of apostasy.

"This was his progressive side and he had another side which was highly regressive. He said the British should never leave India and the Muslims should follow the British and be loyal to them."

He added that Sir Syed was against education of women and he was a patriarch who did not believe in equality of humans.

Allama Iqbal was an open-minded and liberal person in his earlier life, Hoodbhoy said.

He added that there were two Iqbals in his book, the one before 1905 and the other after his return from Britain. "The one who went out was open-minded, liberal, secular and communist. When he came back and joined the Muslim League and persuaded the landlords to join the party. This Iqbal later on celebrated the murder of Raj Pal."

Hoodbhoy refused to consider Iqbal a philosopher because he expressed hatred against philosophy in his writings. "A philosopher's mind should be open to raise bigger questions but Iqbal says, *Azadi-i-Afkar hay Iblees ki Eejad*."

Pervez Hoodboy said Iqbal wrote a letter to his sister, saying he had wasted his whole life in studying philosophy and wished that he had followed advice of his father to "serve religion" instead of studying philosophy. He termed the *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* a diatribe against science, venom against modern civilisation and rejection of Muslim glories of 9th to 13th centuries, calling Ibne Sina and Farabi names.

"Our history is a pack of lies. What we teach in Pakistan Studies has nothing to do with reality and to set things right, I, despite having no credentials as a historian, showed the truth to the people."

Hoodbhoy said Maududi was not significant in the formation of Pakistan. He got prominence in 1953 in the anti-Ahmadi riots in Lahore when he was given a death sentence.

Shehzad Ghias said the idea of Pakistan that was being sold was different from the Pakistan that came to be.

"Jinnah Sahib did not become prime minister but the governor general and on taking charge, he dismissed the government of Bacha Khan, separated Karachi from Sindh and dismissed the government of Sindh after 8/10 months. Bacha Khan and Congress had a majority in NWFP and Babrra ground massacre occurred to end their government." He made it clear that looking at history critically did not mean undoing the independence.

Lauding the 18th Amendment, he said whatever Pakistan survived was due to the parts of the amendment because it brought provincial autonomy and it should lead to local government.

He added that social media was not a place for real discussion. "Social media runs on bots and fake narratives." He went on to say that even if it's really an honest opinion of somebody on social media, it's also a construct that's the result of decades of narrative-building in schools. He said he had left engaging with his followers on social media due to fake narratives.

Hoodbhoy said Jinnah was downgraded in history and Iqbal was upgraded during the regime of Gen Zia because though Jinnah was considered the founder of Pakistan, he did not know religious language, he left no writing while Iqbal had written powerful poetry.

He said the gulf between the Muslims and Hindus started in the 1930s when elections were held in Sindh, Punjab and East Bengal and the Muslim League got only 5pc Muslim votes for the Constituent Assembly and in Punjab, Congress and Unionist Party won. In 1937, Jinnah decided to do away with Hindu-Muslim unity, saying that the Hindus and Muslims could not live together peacefully.

The likely Lahore composition after split into two districts

Official says Lahore North to comprise Wagah, Ravi, Saddar, Shalimar, City and Cantt tehsils, whereas the South will consist of Iqbal Town, Model Town, Raiwind and Nishtar tehsils

LAHORE: The Lahore city district is likely to be divided into two administrative parts - namely the North and South districts, with plans to implement it after Basant as the district administration has sent the relevant data sought by the provincial government, *Dawn* has learnt. "The plan is almost finalised following approval accorded by the highest office of the Punjab government. Hopefully, the two new districts will be created after Basant," a senior official in the Lahore administration confirmed while talking to *Dawn* on Saturday.

The official, who requested anonymity, said the administration had already provided the related data comprising the number of existing 10 tehsils, population, offices, issues etc to the Punjab government. "But I don't know on which basis -- number of tehsils or population, the government decides to bifurcate the city district into two districts. However, the names of the new districts -- Lahore North and Lahore South are almost finalised," he maintained.

Previously, efforts were made to split Lahore into districts, but these proposals did not mature due to administrative, financial, bureaucratic and political issues. In January 2023, the government deferred various plans to divide Lahore into various districts. However, in August 2024, instead of splitting Lahore into districts, the government increased the number of tehsils from five to 10, including the Nishtar, Wagah, Iqbal Town, Ravi and Saddar tehsils along with the five existing tehsils: Raiwind, Model Town, Lahore Cantt, Lahore City, and Shalimar.

The initial plan had been introduced in 2017 under which Lahore was to be divided into four districts. The plan was devised after a massive increase in the city district's population that, at that time, had reached around 10.1m. Initially a committee, headed by the then Lahore commissioner, was formed and it had reached consensus to go ahead with the plan.A ccording to the committee members, Lahore had become difficult to manage with the existing administrative and functional structure due to increasing population with massive horizontal growth of the city. With the lapse of time, uncertain political situations started developing in 2017 and the proposal was dropped.

However, in 2019, the proposal was revived with a suggestion to reduce the number of districts from four to three. In 2020, another proposal, apparently more viable, was floated. According to this proposal, Lahore was to be divided into two districts. This proposal was finally declared as viable in a meeting on Dec 3, 2020. It suggested bifurcation of Lahore into City and Saddar districts with creation of five new tehsils — Ferozewala, Thokar Niaz Baig, Kahna, Kot Abdul Malik and Harbanspura — in the two proposed districts. The then Lahore DC had also asked to expedite the preparation of a PC-II for carrying out impact assessment study for geographic and social & cultural cohesion by hiring consultancy services under the Public Procurement Regulatory Authority Rules with a direction to retain the historical character of the city during the division. A lot of work was done on the proposal of 2020, but later it slowed down due to a lack of political will and other administrative and functional issues.

When Parvez Elahi became the chief minister, he had also ordered the authorities to revive the proposal with a direction to divide Lahore into three districts, as per the proposal of 2019. He finally announced to divide Lahore into three districts. However, there was no suggestion as to what would be the third district. That proposal was also deferred at a later stage.

"All previous proposals have become obsolete now, as the current proposal is being worked very seriously to improve local governance, resolve growing civic issues related to traffic, parking, pollution & smog, encroachment etc. With the bifurcation of Lahore, such issues can be resolved with effective governance as this is not possible with one deputy commissioner in the second largest city of Pakistan having a total population of around 25 million people," the officer argued.

To a question, he said a suggestion had also been given to the government to increase the number of tehsils from 10 to 12. "This suggestion seems from the bureaucracy that, perhaps, does not want Lahore to be split into two districts," he maintained.

To another question, the official said, the Lahore North is likely to have Wagah, Ravi, Saddar, Shalimar, City and Cantt tehsils, whereas the Lahore South district may comprise of Iqbal Town, Model Town, Raiwind and Nishtar tehsils. ***KHALID HASNAIN***

IN SPECTRUM

Classical pulse of Oriental College: recovering humanity thru tradition

By Tahir Kamran

When the University of the Punjab was established in 1882, it emerged at a moment when colonial modernity was rapidly reorganising knowledge into disciplines governed by utility, administration, and power. Yet from its earliest decades, the university carried within it a quiet counter-impulse: the conviction that Oriental learning — Arabic, Persian, Islamic philosophy, philology, and literature — was not a vestige of the past but a living intellectual reservoir capable of shaping ethical subjects. This conviction found its most sustained institutional expression in the Oriental College, Lahore, where classical learning was neither romanticised nor marginalised, but theorised as a mode of intellectual formation.

The commencement of the classical tradition at Oriental College coincided with a civilisational rupture. Indigenous systems of transmission were under strain, the humanities were being displaced by instrumental reason, and identities were increasingly being hardened along lines of religion, race, and empire. In this context, Oriental College functioned as what might be called a *site of epistemic mediation*: a space where tradition encountered modernity not as an adversary but as an interlocutor. Classical disciplines were taught not in opposition to the modern university, but as its ethical grammar — training attention, interpretive patience, and moral imagination.

Few figures embody this ethos more fully than Faiz-ul-Hasan Saharanpuri (1816–1887), whose long tenure as Professor of Arabic at Oriental College established the template for classical learning in the institution. Trained across Delhi, Rampur, Lucknow, and under masters such as Fazl-e-Haq Khairabadi and Mirza Ghalib, Saharanpuri represented the integrated Indo-Islamic curriculum in its most mature form: logic (*mantiq*) as disciplined reasoning, philosophy as metaphysical inquiry, Arabic *adab* as ethical cultivation, Persian poetry as refinement of sensibility, and Islamic sciences as a living tradition of interpretation. His editorship of *Shifa al-Sudur* further extended this pedagogy beyond the classroom, situating scholarship within a public intellectual sphere.

What distinguished Saharanpuri's teaching was not encyclopaedism alone, but a theory of knowledge grounded in *formation rather than information*. Language, in his classroom, was not merely communicative but constitutive; grammar trained the mind in relational thinking, rhetoric cultivated ethical judgment, and literature became a mode of moral self-fashioning. That he declined the colonial title of *Shams al-Ulama* offered by the Punjab University underscores a deeper intellectual posture: authority, for him, resided in fidelity to knowledge rather than recognition by power.

The constellation of his students — Shibli Nomani, Altaf Hussain Hali, Syed Ahmad Khan, Hamiduddin Farahi, among others — signals the far-reaching consequences of this pedagogy for South Asian intellectual history. Equally significant are figures often mentioned only in passing, such as Abdullah Tonkvi and Moulvi Abdul Hakim Kalanauri, whose association with Saharanpuri points to the broader scholarly networks linking Lahore with Tonk, Kalanaur, and other regional centres of learning. These scholars remembered in Oriental College recollections represent this submerged geography of knowledge, where provincial madrasas, princely courts, and the modern university remained in continuous conversation.

This tradition did not fossilise with the nineteenth century. It renewed itself across generations, most notably through scholars such as Maulana Asghar Ali Ruhi (1871–1954), whose intellectual legacy — carefully written about by Dr Khurshid-ul-Hassan Rizvi — formed a crucial bridge between classical scholarship and twentieth-century academic life. Ruhi's commitment to Arabic and Islamic studies, his pedagogical seriousness, and his ethical conception of scholarship profoundly shaped his son, Prof Dr Sufi Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq, one of the most influential teachers at Oriental College. In this lineage, classical learning was not inherited as a set of texts but as a moral discipline — what Dr Rizvi has repeatedly emphasised as *adab-based scholarship*, where character and knowledge are inseparable.

Sufi Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq's long association with Oriental College, his mentorship of Dr Rizvi himself, and the eventual donation of vast personal libraries and manuscripts to Punjab University exemplify a conception of knowledge as *waqf* — a public trust rather than private capital. The same theoretical orientation is evident in the career of Professor Abdul Aziz Memon (Al-Memoni), whose mastery of classical Arabic earned him recognition as *Imam-ul-Lugha* in the Arab world. His authority unsettles modern assumptions about linguistic ownership, demonstrating how classical learning, when pursued rigorously, dissolves ethnic and geographic boundaries.

In Urdu and Persian studies, Hafiz Mahmood Shirani extended the intellectual horizon of Oriental College in a manner that was at once philological, historical, and deeply theoretical. His celebrated thesis *Punjab Mein Urdu* was not merely a linguistic intervention but a sustained critique of cultural essentialism, challenging the idea of languages as sealed, monolithic entities with singular points of origin. By locating Urdu within long histories of migration, conquest, coexistence, and vernacular exchange, Shirani displaced notions of purity with those of encounter and translation. This sensibility finds its most mature articulation in *Maq l t-i-Hafiz Mahmood Shirani*, a veritable mine of knowledge in which literary history, textual criticism, comparative philology, and cultural theory converge. These essays are not only repositories of information but models of method — demonstrating how rigorous engagement with classical sources can unsettle modern anxieties about identity, belonging, and ownership. That such work emerged from Oriental College affirms the institution's role as a space where classical learning functioned as an antidote to reductive narratives of origin and exclusion — narratives that continue to animate contemporary xenophobia under new guises.

Towering above even this formidable contribution is Moulvi Muhammad Shafi, whose life and scholarship crystallise the deepest theoretical commitments of Oriental College. Educated at Cambridge yet profoundly anchored in Islamic intellectual traditions, Shafi embodied the possibility of a scholarship that is at once classical and modern, local and cosmopolitan. He understood, with rare clarity, that classical knowledge does not survive by insulation or reverence alone, but by *translation* — across languages, disciplines, and publics. This vision is preserved most vividly in *Maq l t-i-Maulvi Muhammad Shafi*, a corpus that spans Arabic, Persian, and Urdu, and traverses history, bibliography, textual criticism, and intellectual biography. These essays are not incidental writings; they are conceptual maps of an entire scholarly world, demonstrating how the humanities can remain rigorous without becoming exclusionary, and expansive without becoming shallow.

The legacy of Muhammad Shafi did not end with his own formidable corpus. It endured institutionally and intellectually through scholars such as Syed Abdullah, who carried forward the Encyclopaedia of Islam project in Urdu, transforming his teacher's vision into a lasting scholarly infrastructure. Through Syed Abdullah, the classical-humanist ethos of Oriental College entered a new phase — one marked by editorial discipline, collaborative scholarship, and public pedagogy. This lineage was further sustained by figures like Waheed Qureshi, whose work in literary history and criticism reflected the same commitment to textual depth and cultural plurality; Akram Shah, whose scholarship reinforced the continuity of Arabic and Islamic studies; and Aftab Asghar, whose academic labour preserved and transmitted this tradition to subsequent generations of students.

What unites these figures is not merely institutional affiliation but a shared ethical orientation toward knowledge: the belief that scholarship is an act of stewardship. The works of Shirani and Shafi — especially *Maq l t-i-Hafiz Mahmood Shirani* and *Maq l t-i-Maulvi Muhammad Shafi* — are not closed monuments but open archives, inviting rereading, reinterpretation, and renewal. To highlight and preserve the contributions of Syed Abdullah, Waheed Qureshi, Khawaja Zakariya, Shakoor Ahsan, Akram Shah, and Aftab Asghar is therefore not an exercise in commemoration alone; it is a reminder that traditions survive only when they are consciously carried forward, taught with integrity, and defended against the pressures of intellectual amnesia. In an age increasingly hostile to complexity, this lineage of Oriental College stands as a quiet yet resolute affirmation: that classical learning, when grounded in ethical seriousness and historical depth, remains one of the most powerful resources for resisting cultural fragmentation and recovering a shared humanity.

Seen through this lens, the classical tradition at Oriental College was never an antiquarian exercise. It was, and remains, a form of ethical resistance. In an age marked by intellectual shallowness, accelerated judgment, and mutual alienation, classical learning offers an alternative anthropology. It teaches slowness against haste, interpretation against slogan, and disagreement without erasure. Arabic grammar disciplines relational thought; Persian poetry refines moral imagination; Islamic intellectual history models pluralism within commitment.

The pages of Oriental College journals — many now preserved at Rekhta — bear witness to this lived practice of scholarship: *adab* as method, *ikhtilaf* as virtue, and learning as a pathway toward shared humanity. The commencement of the classical tradition at Oriental College, Lahore, was therefore not a nostalgic gesture but a civilisational wager — that humanity can still be retrieved through depth, patience, and disciplined inheritance. To return to this tradition today is not to retreat from the present, but to recover the moral grammar without which no future can remain human.